

**Launch of National Breastfeeding Campaign and Hand-Over of
Breastfeeding and Lactation Room
Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Ministério dos Negócios Estrangeiros e
Cooperação – MNEC)**

17 April 2023

Time: 08.30 – 11.30

**(English – Tetun) Statement by Bilal Aurang Zeb Durrani
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My deepest respects and gratitude to:

Your Excellency, the President of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste

Your Excellency, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation

Your Excellency, the Minister of Health

Your Excellency, the Executive Director of the Mission Unit for Combat Stunting,

Your Excellency, Ambassadors and Representatives from Diplomatic Missions
Distinguished colleagues from Government, Development Partners, UN agencies,
the World Bank and NGOs,
Friends from the media,
Ladies and gentlemen.

Bomdia

Excellencies,



This is Xavier. He was found by UNICEF's Community Health Workers (called Mother Support Group) in the Talimoro village which lies in the mountainous heart of Timor-Leste, in the Ermera Municipality.

Xavier was severely malnourished, and would have died if no action was taken. He had a mid-upper arm circumference (MUAC) of just 10 cm, weighed only five kilograms, and was so weak that he could barely lift his head. With UNICEF's support, he was immediately rushed to a community health centre (CHC) in the municipal capital in Gleno.

Unfortunately, there are many more children like Xavier. In Ermera alone, 63% of children are stunted or chronically malnourished, 40% of the children are underweight, and 8% of children are wasted or acutely malnourished. Most often, newborn babies are not exclusively breastfed for six months, often due to poor knowledge on the importance of and support for early initiation and exclusive breastfeeding, or receive poor nutrition after the introduction of complementary feeding when a child turns 6 months old.

Xavier's condition should not have been like this. All of this malnutrition, and deaths among children are preventable. Breastfed children have at least six times a greater chance of survival in the early months than non-breastfed children. An exclusively breastfed child is 14 times less likely to die in the first six months than a non-exclusively breastfed child. Exclusive breastfeeding reduces under-five mortality by 13 percent.

Once at the community health centre in Gleno, healthcare workers determined the severity of Xavier's condition, and immediately started him on a therapeutic milk diet to help build his body back up to a healthy state, while also treating any underlying diseases.

After spending several weeks at the CHC in Gleno, Xavier's condition has improved, he is now able to eat solid food again, and he is slowly regaining his strength.



We need **three immediate actions** to reverse the situation of children in Timor-Leste:

1. Expand community health workers across the country. UNICEF is proud to have provided a successful model of Mother Support Groups at the Aldea level. The members of MSG live and serve in remote regions of Timor-Leste.

UNICEF presently supports the groups in every village in the country, such as Talimoro. Several thousand volunteer members of the Mother Support Groups raise awareness about children's nutrition, conduct screening and referral for acute malnutrition, organize cooking demonstrations with locally available

diversified food, promote pre and ante natal care and encourage the uptake of routine vaccinations for children under 5.

Right now, they are funded by UNICEF's HQ, the European Union, and the governments of Japan and Australia. The Ministry of Health must absorb these Mother Support Groups as part of its Saudi na Familia programme, and provide scalability and sustainability to this successful model.



2. The second immediate action is to empower **mothers** to diagnose malnutrition, by training mothers, like Xavier's mother Rosa, to use this simple strip of laminated measuring tape, called MUAC, which stands for mid-upper-arm circumference. It costs less than six cents, and is revolutionizing the diagnosis of malnutrition and empowering families to better care for their children around the globe.

The tape, when properly wrapped around a child's arm, displays a color in a small window, helping caregivers determine if the child is nourished (green), has

moderate acute malnutrition (yellow), or has severe acute malnutrition (red) which was Xavier's case.

3. The third immediate action is to have trained Nutritionists at the very Health Post level, in addition to the CHCs and the hospitals. UNICEF is supporting the Ministry of Health to train hundreds of health workers from across the country on infant and young child feeding practices. These health workers then train MSG members in their respective health districts.



Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen:

This country is very lucky and blessed to have leaders such as the one present in this very room today. Each one of these leaders is a champion for children's wellbeing.

His Excellency, the President has escalated child malnutrition to be a state priority. Her Excellency, the Minister of Health, has increased the Ministry's budget for nutrition security, finalized the Decree law on Breastmilk Substitutes, and escalated the Nutrition Department to a Directorate.

Her Excellency, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, becomes the first Minister to launch a Breastfeeding and Lactation Room in a government institution to support working mothers. MNEC is setting a role model for how each institution in Timor-Leste should promote and support breastfeeding.

UNICEF is proud to be part of this journey from day 1. Our legal advisors supported the Ministry of Health in the drafting, revising and approval of the decree law on breastmilk substitute code, the National Health Sector Nutrition Strategic Plan, and the Nutrition and Food Security Survey, to name a few, which contributed to evidence and data for planning, advocacy and increased resources.

In 2022 alone, UNICEF supported the Ministry of Health to reach more than 4,000 children suffering from Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) with treatment at an 81% cure rate.

Today, UNICEF's team, including our engineers and nutritionists, is very proud to provide financial and technical support to launch the breastfeeding and Lactation room at MNEC. This facility will support the staff of MNEC to continue breastfeeding their babies after returning to work from maternity. Such efforts contribute to the Government's efforts to increase breastfeeding rates and reduce malnutrition among children.



In conclusion, this national Breast-Feeding Campaign, which starts today, is an opportunity for more awareness to be raised on the importance of Breastfeeding. Through a variety of multimedia messaging and community engagements, parents and caregivers will receive the right information on how breastfeeding is the cheapest and safest way to ensure the optimum growth and survival of every child.

By protecting, promoting, and supporting breastfeeding and thus increasing breastfeeding rates, we can save lives and improve the health, social, and economic development of individuals, families, and the country.

Xavier's story is that of hope, and I have no doubt that if we all worked together towards targeted actions across the country, we will achieve Timor-Leste's goal of reducing stunting among children by 22% by 2030.

I thank you for your kind attention.

Tetun:

Bom dia

Exelensias,

Nee mak Xavier. Nia hetan husi UNICEF nia Grupu Apoiu Saúde Komunitaria (hanaran Grupu Suporta Inan) iha suku Talimoro ne'ebé hela iha Timor-Leste nia sentru foho-oan , iha Munisipiu Ermera.

Xavier hetan malnutrisaun todan, no karik sei mate se la iha asaun. Nia iha sirkunstánsia liman parte-aas (MUAC) ho sentímetru 10 deit, nia todan kilograma lima deit, no fraku tebes to'o nia la bele foti ulun. Ho apoiu husi UNICEF, nia hetan lalais kedas atendimentu iha sentru saúde komunitária ida (CHC) iha kapitál munisípiu Gleno.

Infelizmente, iha labarik barak loos hanesan Xavier. Iha Ermera mesak deit, 63% husi labarik sira raes-badak ka malnutrisaun krónika, 40% husi labarik sira menus todan, no 8% husi labarik sira lakon sira-nia todan ka malnutrisaun grave. Dala barak liu, bebé foin moris la fó-susubeen eksklusivu ba fulan neen, dala barak tanba koñesimentu ne'ebé ladún di'ak kona-ba importánsia no apoiu ba inisiasaun sedu no fó-susubeen eksklusivu, ka hetan nutrisaun ne'ebé ladún di'ak depois introdúsaun ho hahán komplementár bainhira labarik ida foin tinan 6.

Xavier nia kondisaun labele hanesan nee. Malnutrisaun sira ne'e hotu, no mate iha labarik sira-nia leet, bele prevene. Labarik sira ne'ebé fó-susubeen inan iha pelumenus dala neen dala ida iha oportunidade boot liu ba sobrevivénsia iha fulan hirak dahuluk duke labarik sira ne'ebé la fó-susubeen inan. Labarik ne'ebé fó-susubeen inan eksklusivu de'it mak dala 14 menus liu atu mate iha fulan neen dahuluk duke labarik ne'ebé la fó-susubeen inan eksklusivu. Fo-susubeen inan eskuzivu hamenus mortalidadetinan lima mai kraik husi pursentu 13.

Dala ida iha sentru saúde komunitáriu iha Gleno, pesoál saúde sira determina Xavier nia kondisaun ne'ebé sériu, no hahú kedas halo dieta susubeen terapeutika

hodi ajuda rekupera fali nia isin ba kondisaun saudavel, no mós halo tratamentu ba kualkér moras ne'ebé nia sofre hela.

Hafoin liu tiha semana balu iha Sentru Saúde Komunitaria Gleno, Xavier nia kondisaun sai di'ak liu, agora nia bele han fali ai-han ne'ebé sólidu, no nia forsa rekuperadu nenineik fali ona.

Ita presiza asaun imediata tolu atu hadiak fali labarik sira-nia situasaun iha Timor-Leste:

1. Habelar profesional saúde komunitáriu sira iha país laran tomak. UNICEF orgullu tebes tanba fornese ona modelu susesu ida husi Grupu Suporta Inan sira iha nivel Aldea. Membru MSI sira hela no serve iha rejiaun remota sira iha Timor-Leste.

Oras ne'e UNICEF suporta grupu sira iha suku ida-idak iha país ne'e, hanesan iha Talimoro. Membru voluntáriu rihun ba rihun husi Grupu Suporta Inan hasa'e konsiénsia kona-ba labarik sira-nia nutrisaun, halo triajen no referál ba malnutrisaun grave, organiza demonstrasaun te'in ho ai-han diversifikadu ne'ebé disponivel lokalmente, promove kuidadu antenatal no enkoraja simu vasinasaun rutina ba labarik tina lima mai kraik.

Oras ne'e daudaun, sira hetan finansiamentu husi UNICEF nia Kuartel Jeral, Uniaun Europeia, no governu sira husi Japaun no Australia. Ministeriu Saúde tenke absorve Grupu Suporta Inan sira-ne'e nu'udar parte ida husi ninia programa Saúde na Familia, no fornese eskalabilidade no sustentabilidade ba modelu ida-ne'ebé susesu.

2. Asaun imediata daruak mak atu fó kapasita inan sira atu halo diagnose ba malnutrisaun, liuhusi treinamentu ba inan sira, hanesan Xavier nia inan Rosa, atu uza tali simples husi fita-metru laminada, ne'ebé hanaran MUAC, ne'ebé signifika sirkunferensia liman-kabun. Kustu ne'e menus husi sentavus neen, no halo revolusaun ba diagnose malnutrisaun no fó kbiit ba família sira atu tau matan di'ak liu ba sira-nia oan iha mundu tomak.

Fita, bainhira kesi didi'ak iha labarik nia liman-kabun, hatudu kór ida iha janela ki'ik ida, ajuda kuidador sira atu determina se labarik ne'e nutrida ka lae (koor matak), iha malnutrisaun moderada (koor kinur), ka iha malnutrisaun aguda grave (mean) ne'e mak Xavier nia kazu.

3. Asaun imediata datolu mak atu fó formasaun ba Nutrisionista sira iha nivel Postu Saúde nian, aleinde SSK no ospital sira. UNICEF suporta hela Ministeriu Saúde hodi fó treinu ba profesional saúde atus ba atus husi país tomak kona-ba prátika fó han ba bebé no labarik sira. Profesional saúde sira-ne'e tuirmai fó fali treinamentu ba membru MSI sira iha sira-nia respetiva distritu saude sira.

Exelensia Señor no señora

País ida-ne'e sorte no abensoadu tebes tanba iha lider sira hanesan ne'ebé ohin loron marka prezensa iha sala ida ne'e. Lider sira ida-idak sai nu'udar kampaun ba labarik sira-nia ben-estar.

Sua Exelensia, Prezidente deside ona malnutrisaun ba labarik sai nu'udar prioridade estado nian. Sua Exelensia, Ministra Saúde, aumenta ona orsamentu Ministeriu nian ba seguransa nutrisaun, finaliza ona Dekretu Lei kona-ba Substituisaun Susubeen inan nian, no hasa'e ona Departamentu Nutrisaun ba Diresaun ida.

Sua Exelensia, Ministra Negosiu Estranjeiru no Kooperasaun, sai hanesan Ministra dahuluk ne'ebé lansa Sala Fo-susubeen inan no iha instituisaun governu ida hodi apoia inan serbisu-nain sira. MNEK estabelese ona modelu ida oinsá instituisaun ida-idak iha Timor-Leste tenke promove no apoia fó-susubeen inan.

UNICEF sente orgullu hodi hola parte iha jornada ne'e hahú husi loron 1. Ami-nia asesor legál sira apoia Ministeriu Saúde iha nia esbosu, revizaun no aprovasaun ba dekretu-lei kona-ba kódigu substitutivu ba susubeen-inan, Planu Estratejiku Nasional ba Nutrisaun iha Setor Saúde, no Peskiza ba Nutrisaun no Seguransa Aihan, hodi naran balu, ne'ebé kontribui ba evidénsia no dados ba planeamentu, advokasia no aumenta rekursu sira.

Iha tinan 2022 mesak deit, UNICEF suporta Ministeriu Saúde hodi atinji labarik na'in 4.000 resin ne'ebé sofre Malnutrisaun Grave (MG) ho tratamentu ho taxa kura 81%.

Ohin loron, UNICEF nia ekipa, inklui ami-nia enjeñeiru no nutrisionista sira, orgullu tebes hodi fó apoiu finanseiru no tékniku hodi lansa sala fó-susubeen inan no fó-susu iha MNEC. Fasilidade ida-ne'e sei apoia funsionáriu MNEC sira atu kontinua fó-susu ba sira-nia bebé hafoin fila fali ba servisu husi materninade. Esforsu hirak-ne'e kontribui ba esforsu Governu nian atu hasa'e taxa fó-susubeen inan no hamenus malnutrisaun iha labarik sira-nia leet.

Ikusliu, Kampaña Fó-susubeen ina Nasionál ida-ne'e, hahú ohin, nu'udar oportunidade ida atu hasa'e konsiénsia liután kona-ba importánsia husi kampaña fó-susubeen inan. Liu husi mensajen multimedia oioin no involvimentu komunitaria, inan-aman no kuidador sira sei simu informasaun ne'ebé loos kona-ba oinsá fó-susubeen inan mak dalan ne'ebé baratu liu no seguru liu atu garante kresimentu no sobrevivénsia ne'ebé optimu ba labarik ida-idak.

Liu husi proteje, promove, no apoia fó-susubeen inan no aumenta taxa fó-susubeen inan, ita bele salva moris no hadi'a dezenvolvimentu saúde, sosiál no ekonómiku ba individu, família no país.

Xavier nia istória mak esperansa ida, no ha'u laiha dúvida katak se ita hotu serbisu hamutuk hodi halo asaun ne'ebé desesionadu iha país laran tomak, ita sei alkansa Timor-Leste nia objetivu atu reduz raes-badak entre labarik sira hamutuk 22% iha 2030.

Hau agradese bai mi hotu nia atensaun.